

Significant Changes in the 2015 IRC

Effective January 1, 2016

Heating and Cooling equipment shall be sized in accordance with ACCA Manual S based on building loads calculated in accordance with ACCA Manual J. The worksheets are required to be submitted with the building permit application.

Air Leakage testing (**blower door**) is mandatory along with visual inspection by an approved third party testing agency. The air leakage rate cannot exceed 3 air changes per hour.

Story height of wood and steel wall framing, insulated concrete and SIP walls may not exceed 11 feet, 7 inches. Masonry wall height is limited to 13 feet, 7 inches. **An engineered design shall be provided for the wall or wall framing members where the limits of Chapter 6 are exceeded.**

The provisions for separating “attached” townhouses with structurally independent fire-resistant-rated walls in accordance with R302.1 have been removed in favor of common wall provisions of R302.2. Common walls separating townhouses must now be rated for 2 hours when an automatic sprinkler system is not in the townhomes.

Battery-operated smoke alarms are permitted for satisfying the smoke alarm power requirements when alterations, repairs and additions occur.

New provisions address smoke alarms installed near bathrooms and cooking appliances.

Carbon monoxide alarms require connection to the house wiring system with battery backup.

New table R602.7(3) has been added for girder and header spans for open porches

New table R602.7.5 has been added for minimum number of full-height (king) studs at the end of each header in exterior walls.

Limitations for EIFS systems with and without drainage have been added. Section 703.9.

The exception allowing attic ventilation to be waived by the building official has been removed. Specific details now exist in the code for both vented and unvented attics.

The location of the permanent energy certificate has been moved to the proximity of the furnace or another approved location inside the building.

Dryer exhaust duct power ventilators are now recognized by the code. The ventilator allows increase in clothes dryer exhaust duct length.

A permanent label identifying the length of the dryer exhaust duct is required when the exhaust duct exceeds 35 feet in length.

Automatic operation of a mechanical damper is no longer required for supplying makeup air for kitchen exhaust systems exceeding 400 cfm. Transfer openings are permitted to obtain makeup air from rooms other than the kitchen.

Cooking appliances designed, tested, listed and labeled for use in a commercial use only shall not be installed within a residence.

Maximum exhaust duct lengths have been established in the code based on the duct diameter, duct type and exhaust fan airflow rating.

The provisions for return air have been simplified and clarified to improve understanding while preserving the intent of keeping contaminants out of the airstream of HVAC systems.

PVC and CPVC pipe are expressly prohibited materials for supplying fuel gas.

Support spacing requirements for PEX and PE-RT tubing 1 ¼" and greater have been added.

The T&P relief valve discharge pipe termination must have a suitable air gap to protect the potable water distribution system for the building.

Nonpotable water outlets, such as hose connections, must be identified with a warning and symbol that nonpotable water is being used.

Garage receptacle outlets must be served by a separate branch circuit that does not supply other outlets. At least one receptacle outlet is required for each car space in a garage.